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Mr. NEWMAN'S
SERMON

Preach'd to the
SOCIETIES
FOR

Reformation of Manners,

Octob. the 3d, 1709.

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A
SERMON

Preach'd at 2.
SALTERS-HALL,
TO THE
SOCIETIES

FOR
Reformation of Manners,
In the CITIES of
London and Westminster.

On Monday October the 3d, 1709.

By JOHN NEWMAN.

Published at their Request.

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 MARK VIII. 38.

Whosoever therefore shall be ashamed of me, and of my Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him also shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.

OUR blessed Saviour in the 34th Verse of the Chapter lays down the *stated* and *indispensible* Terms of real Christianity, which we must all approve of and comply with, as ever we expect to share in the Priviledges that belong to his Disciples: *If any Man will be Christ's Disciple he must deny himself, take up his Cross, and follow him.* Our Lord does not go about to draw Persons into his Service, by raising in them delusive Hopes and Expectations, or by concealing from them the worst that their Fidelity and Faithfulness to him; may expose them to: Unless we are prepar'd and resolv'd in Dependance upon Divine Grace, when called to it, to exercise the severest Acts of Self-Denial, *viz.* those of quitting all our Temporal Interests and Enjoyments, and of laying down our Lives for Christ's Sake, we
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are not fit to be his Disciples. But least any shou'd think these are hard Sayings, and that Christ is an austere Master for insisting upon such Terms; he assures us that all his faithful Servants shall eventually be great Gainers by his Service; *those* not excepted, who to an Eye of Sense sustain the greatest Loss: And as for *them* that think to secure themselves by Unfaithfulness to him, they'll suffer a dreadful and shameful Disappointment. He will preserve the Lives of his Servants, as long as he has any Work to be done by them; and when ever there is a Necessity, they shou'd offer up their natural Life a *Sacrifice* to his Honour, it shall be exchanged for an eternal Life; whereas others who seek by declining their Duty, to save their Lives, lose eternal Life, and so suffer irreparable Damage and Loss. Thus *who-so-ever will save his Life shall lose it, but who-so-ever shall lose his Life for Christ's Sake and the Gospel's, the same shall save it. It will not profit a Man, if he should gain the whole World, and lose his Soul, there is nothing a Man can give in Exchange for his Soul, Ver. 35, 36, 37.* There is then no sufficient Reason why the Fear or certain Prospect of the greatest Sufferings should either deterr any from becoming Christ's Disciples, or make them unfaithful afterwards: If the Fear of *Death* should not, *much less* shou'd the Fears of a little *Shame* and *Reproach* have this Effect upon us. If the Rewards of another World will

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will be an abundant Recompence for the Loss of our Lives in Christ's Cause and Service, how much more will they be an Over-balance for any little Scorn or Reproach that may be cast upon us on that Account? *especially*, when we withal consider, that those who wilfully desert Christ, thro' Fear of Reproach from Men, do hereby render themselves the just Objects of, and will certainly fall under, his holy Indignation and Contempt: For he that is Truth, hath told us, *that whosoever shall be ashamed of him and his Words, in this adulterous and sinful Generation, of him shall the Son of Men be ashamed, when he cometh in the Glory of his Father, with the holy Angels.*

Which Words are a solemn and awful Denunciation uttered by Christ himself against all those who are ashamed of him: There seems to be a very observable *Antithesis* between the two Parts of the Text; as Sinners are ashamed of Christ, so he will be ashamed of them; as they are ashamed of him in his State of Meanness and Humiliation, so he will be ashamed of them in his State of Exaltation, when he shall come in the Glory of his Father; as they are ashamed of him before an adulterous and sinful Generation, so he will be ashamed of them before the holy Angels. Thus will there be some Suitableness and Proportion between their Sin and Punishment.

*Vide Pool's
Synop.*

In discoursing upon this Subject, I shall first consider,

I. *The Nature and Greatness of this Sin, of being asham'd of Christ and his Words.*

II. *Represent the Awfulness of the Punishment here threatned.*

III. *Answer some Objections: And*

IV. *Make a suitable Application.* I begin,

I. With the Consideration of the Nature and Greatness of the Sin, under which general Head I shall shew, what we are to understand by being *ashamed of Christ and his Words*; when Persons are so guilty of this Sin, as to be liable to the threatned Punishment; and then prove the Greatness of it.

These Expressions *ashamed of me, and my Words*, do immediately relate to the Person and Doctrine of Christ; but there is no Necessity they shou'd be so confin'd to the Exclusion of other things. They fitly extend to his Cause and Interest in the World, the Institutions of his Worship, the Design of his Coming, and to all those things wherein his Honour and Glory are nearly concern'd: These Things are as dear to Christ as himself: He looks upon his suffering and despis'd Members as a Part of himself, and reckons what is done, for or against *them*, as done for or against *himself*: *Inasmuch as ye have or have not done it to one of the least, &c.* Mat. 25. 40. He call'd to *Saul* out of Heaven in this

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this Language, *Saul, Saul, why persecutest thou me? I am Jesus whom thou persecutest.* Acts 9. 4, 5. By opposing Christ's Interest, or by being ashamed to own and promote it, we shew that we are ashamed of Christ himself: Since he hath left our World and is gone to Heaven, what other Way have we to shew our Esteem and Affection, then by heartily espousing and carrying on the great Design he came into the World about? Besides the Words of Christ may justly include the *preceptive*, as well as the *doctrinal* Part of the Gospel Revelation: It is as much the Word and Will of Christ, *that whosoever names his Name, should depart from all Iniquity*, as that he should believe him to be the Son of God and Saviour of the World. If then the *Reformation of Manners* be the Cause of Christ, a Work agreeable to his Mind and Will, for the Accomplishment of which he came into this World, to be ashamed of *that*, is to be ashamed of *him*, and they who are so, are in Danger of the Threatning, they may justly expect, he will be *ashamed of them*. I would just touch upon each of these,

1. *The Reformation of Manners* is the Cause of Christ, and Part of the Design he had in his Eye, when he assumed our Nature; this cannot be denied by those who read and believe the Bible; *the Grace of the Gospel teaches Men to deny all Ungodliness and worldly Lusts, &c.* Tit. 2. 12. *For this Purpose, was the Son of God manifested, that he might destroy the Works of the Devil,* 1 John 3. 9. He had his Name

Jesus (a Saviour) given him, because he was to save his People from their Sins, Mat. 1. 21. He gave himself for us, that he might redeem us from all Iniquity, and purifie us to himself, &c. Tit. 2. 14. As this was plainly his Design, so he took an admirable Method for the Accomplishment of it, which can't but be evident to those, who seriously consider the several Parts of the Gospel-Dispensation; such as the great and the glorious *Doctrines* reveal'd therein, concerning the Nature and Perfections of God, the Evil and Desert of Sin, the Design of his Incarnation, the Nature and End of his bitter Sufferings; as also the extensive Nature of those *moral Precepts and Prohibitions*, which are there most fully and clearly laid down, together with the powerful *Sanctions*, by which they are back'd and enforc'd; besides the manifold amiable *Examples* of Purity and Holiness, which are there propos'd to our Imitation, and especially the *Example* of Christ himself.

There never was any Institution so excellently adapted to reform Mankind, as is the *Christian Institution*; and consequently *Immorality* and *Prophaness* under a Christian Name admits of peculiar Aggravations, and is more than ordinarily reproachful and scandalous. I freely own a meer external Reformation is not Christ's entire and whole Design, all that he intends and requires, or all that there is an Aptitude in the Gospel to effect upon Men: He as a Saviour is sent to change

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Mens Tempers and Inclinations, their Principles and their Ends, to deliver them from the internal Power of Sin and Satan, and to make them Partakers of a Divine Nature. This is the *nobler Part* of his reforming Design; this in a prevalent Degree is attain'd in all those who are his real Members: *If any Man be in Christ, he is a new Creature,* 2 Cor. 5. 17. And this also is absolutely necessary to Mens eternal Salvation: *Blessed are the pure in Heart, for they only shall see God,* Mat. 5. 8. Now tho' this nobler Part of Christ's Design be not that which immediately lies before these **WORTHY SOCIETIES**, (for you can only restrain and punish the grosser external Acts of Sin) yet what you do is a Step towards, and may subserve *that higher Design*: Those who escape the *Pollutions of the World*, may in Time come to be inwardly renew'd; and those who abstain from Sin only from Fear of Punishment from Men, may at last be brought to discern the Evil and Malignity of it, and so may leave it from more divine and noble Considerations. It's certain, Mens Hearts can never be chang'd, while their Lives are vicious and prophane: *The Tree is known by it's Fruit,* Mat. 7. 17. But suppose your Endeavours should not succeed to Mens real Sanctification, yet you ought not to look upon the Preventing many external Acts of Sin, and the reforming the Conversations of Men, to be an inconsiderable thing; when you cannot do all you

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would, you must do what you can ; an imperfect Reformation is better then none at all ; it answers many valuable Ends ; so far as it is carryed on, it is pleasing to Christ, he looks upon such, who espouse and promote it, as embark'd in the same Design with himself ; consequently they, that are ashamed of this CAUSE, are in Christ's Esteem and Account asham'd of *him*. Hence it follows,

2. That they are liable to the *Punishment* here threatned : Is there not as much Reason, why our neglecting or disowning the *moral Duties* of Christianity, should expose us to the Displeasure of Christ, as our disowning the *doctrinal Articles* of Faith ? why is it not as glorious to die a *Martyr* for the one, as for the other ? *John the Baptist* lost his Life in asserting the *Obligation of the moral Law* ; for reprov-
ing *Herod* for taking *Herodias* his Brother's Wife ; he did not lose the Honour and Reward of Martyrdom. *Moral Duties* lie more level to the Capacity of Man in his fallen State ; they admit not of those Debates and Disputes, which many *Articles of Faith* are capable of ; for the most of them are discoverable by natural Light, and are agreeable to the Dictates of natural Conscience, those especially which you endeavour to restore the Practice of. In *Pagan Countries* under heathenish Darknes, there never were any Laws made against Justice, Sobriety, and Temperance, or to encourage the contrary Vices ; all Nations agree to reprove the one and

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condemn the other; so that Persons in their *Immorality* must at least be as inexcusable as any can be in their *Infidelity*. Now if Christ will not hold them guiltless, who are *ashamed of the Doctrines of the Gospel*, when the publick owning of them will expose them to the hottest Persecution and Sufferings, much less will he hold them *guiltless*, who under lesser Temptations, are ashamed of the *holy Precepts* thereof.

Having thus endeavour'd to fix the Sense of these Expressions; *being ashamed of me and my Words*, and shewn that the Cause you are engag'd in, comes within the Compass of them, I shall now,

2. Consider who are so *guilty* of this Sin, as to be lyable to the *threatned Punishment*. For the stating of this, I shall lay down the following Particulars.

1. Our Saviour chiefly speaks of those, who are or have been by *Profession* his *Disciples*: This is (I think) evident from the Context, where he mentions the Character and Duties of those that will *follow* him: Faith in Christ is the indispensable Duty of all that have the Gospel fairly propounded to them; there is that convictive Light and Evidence accompanying the Gospel Revelation, as is sufficient to leave all Infidels without any just Excuse for their Infidelity; he told the *Jews* that *they had no Cloak for their Sin*, Joh. 15. 22. and if *they did not believe him to be the Messias*, *they should die in their Sins*, Joh. 8. 24. But

yet they, who were once by Profession Christ's Friends and Subjects, and do afterwards desert and forsake him, cast the greatest Reproach and Contempt upon him; they seem of the two to be the greatest Criminals, and have the severest Punishment denounced against them; *It had been better for them not to have known the Way of Righteousness, than after they have known it to turn from the holy Commandment*, 2 Pet. 2. 21. There remains nothing for them, but a fearful looking for of Judgment and fiery Indignation, Heb. 10. 26, 27. The Language of these Mens Carriage is, that after Trial and Examination, they find not that in Christ and his Religion, which answers their Expectation, that there is something in it, which will not bear an impartial Test, therefore they are *ashamed* any longer to adhere to such a Cause.

2. Our Saviour speaks of *that Shame*, that is some Way or other discovered to others; the Soul of Man is the Seat or Subject of Fear and Shame, and the rest of the Passions; but 'till these appear to others, either in Words or Actions, they come not up to that which is here threatned; for what is in the Text stiled *a being ashamed of Christ, &c.* is in Mat. 10. 33. call'd *a denying of him before Men*; this latter is the Effect of the former: *Shame* indulg'd disposes to, and will produce an open Denial of Christ in an Hour of Temptation. It's not enough for us in our Minds, to maintain good and honourable Thoughts of Christ, and

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with the Heart to believe on him; but with the Mouth Confession also must be made unto Salvation, Rom. 10. 10. Tho' the owning of Christ with our Mouths will never save us, while we deny him with our Heart; yet the Denial of the Mouth will prove fatal and destructive. He expects that Persons should make it manifest to the World, by an open Profession and constant Tenour of Actions, that they are not ashamed of their Relation to, Faith in, and Expectations from him. If Men should not really think in their own Minds that there is any Thing in the Cause of Christ, which is in it self dishonourable and reproachful, yet if thro' Fear of what others may unjustly load them with, they speak and act as if they thought so, this by just Construction Christ will interpret *a being ashamed of him*.

3. It is not every Degree of sinful Shame, that will expose Persons to this heavy Judgment; there are but too great Remains of this in some of God's own People; the natural Constitutions of some Men make them more in Danger of it then others; that hinders them from being so publicly useful as they might and should be; they too often let slip fit Opportunities of reprovng and punishing Sin; tho' they dare not designedly countenance Sin, yet their sinful Modesty and Bashfulness keep them from shewing their just Displeasure and Resentment against it; when they are not Imitators, they are too silent and patient Spectators of the Sins of others; they come oft-

oft'ner and stay longer in the Company of prophane Persons than there is real Necessity ; and when they are there, they conceal their Character, when a prudent and seasonable owning of it, might prevent the Commission of many Sins ; tho' some such particular Instances may be consistent with an *honest Principle*, yet they are by no Means to be made light of ; they are displeasing to Christ, and lead the Way to grosser Instances of Departure from him : It's a dangerous thing to let such a Temper of Soul grow upon us. Such Persons are ill prepar'd for the fiery Trial ; tho' they should finally persevere, and so should not be publicly disowned by Christ in the Judgment of the great Day, yet they will miss of those *Degrees* of Glory, those *publick Marks* of Honour and Respect, which he will put upon such as have been his most zealous and faithful Servants.

4. There is not *any Degree* of this *sinful Shame* sincerely repented of, that will bring upon us the threatned Judgment. Christ only speaks of those, who persist in this Sin to the very last. Such is the Grace of the Gospel, that it invites the worst of Sinners to Repentance, and promises Pardon to them ; *Let the Wicked forsake his Way, and the unrighteous Man his Thoughts, and let him turn unto the Lord, and he will have Mercy upon him, and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon, Isa. 55. 7.* If any of you are afraid or conscious to your selves, that you have run into this Sin, this should not discourage

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discourage but quicken your Repentance ; the Recovery of such Sinners is indeed very difficult, and uncommon, but it is not utterly impossible and desperate ; here is room for Hope and Endeavour : God may, peradventure, give Repentance to the Acknowledgement of the Truth ; and where ever he gives Repentance, he gives Remission of Sins.

Having premis'd these Particulars, I shall now more directly shew, who they are, that are *so chargeable* with this Sin, that without a deep Repentance, they will fall under the threatened Punishment. As,

1. This is the Condition of all those who have *cast off the Belief and Profession of Christianity*, who disbelieve the Articles of the Christian Faith, either in whole, or in any of the fundamental Branches of it, and whose Morals are of the same Size and Extent with their Faith : These Persons generally, first, *Put away a good Conscience*, and afterwards *make Shipwreck of Faith* : 1 Tim. 1. 19. If any of their Actions be materially such, as Christ in his Gospel requires of us, they have no Regard to his Authority in what they do, but make their own Will and Humour, or the precarious and uncertain Maxims of worldly Honour and Safety the Rule of their Actions. This is the Case of such as in a Christian Country turn *Deists* and *Infidels*, they are weary of wearing a Christian Name, reckon it a Reproach to them, and had rather be reputed the Followers of any one than of the blessed *Jesus* ; they bend all
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their profane Wit and Malice, to undermine and overturn the Foundations of that *Holy Religion* into which they were once baptized, that they may introduce meer *Paganism* into the Christian World. These are *Apostates* of the first Magnitude; as they are Christ's most bitter Enemies; so they are Objects of all that terrible Vengeance he has threatned in his Word against such. In the first Ages of Christianity, the Fear of Suffering and Death was generally the Spring of Apostacy; but in our Days, we have Reason to think that it arises from a worse Principle: Thro' the Indulgence of Heaven, Christianity has had the Countenance of the *Civil Magistrate* for several Ages. An external Profession of it is very consistent with Men's worldly Interest and Safety; if notwithstanding this, they reckon it a Disgrace to be Nominal Christians, this must proceed from spiritual Pride, and a secret Dislike of the Holy Design and Tendency of Christianity.

2. They are chargeable with this Sin, who do not in *their own Persons* sincerely comply with the *Design of the Gospel*, whatever their Profession may be. Many *nominal* Christians are *real* Infidels; they do not at Heart believe that Religion they make Profession of; but still they continue their Profession because they think it most prudent and politick, most for their Honour and Interest to bear a Christian Name: Persons of these Principles, neither are, nor can be *real* Friends to Christ; it is not the Honour of

Christ

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Christ that sways and governs them in their Actions; they, will no longer have a regard to *that*, than it is consistent with and conducive to their *own*. There are others, that by Means of their Education, have some Kind of notional and traditional Belief and Perswasion, that the Gospel is a divine Revelation, that Christ is the Saviour of the World; but this is a weak and spiritless Principle, that has no sanctifying Power and Efficacy upon their Hearts and Lives; they live in *Rioting and Drunkenness, in Chambering and Wantonness*; Rom. 13. 13. or in some other fleshly Lust; they are utter Strangers to the true Spirit and Life of Religion, satisfying themselves with the *Form of Godliness*, whilst they deny the *Power thereof*, 2 Tim. 3. 5. They, reckon *Simplicity and godly Sincerity* to be needless Scrupulosity and Preciseness, and scorn to conform to, and regulate their Actions by the strict Rules and Precepts of the Gospel; these Persons, either consider not the Connection and Consequences of Things, or else foolishly hope to reconcile the Christian Faith with a wicked Life. Tho' these in *Words* may own Christ, yet in *Works* they deny him, being *abominable, disobedient, and to every good Work reprobate*, Tit. 1. 16. How sound soever their *Notions* may be, they will never make amends for the *Heresy* of a wicked Life. It's hard to suppose they should really believe that Gospel their Lives are a plain Contradiction to; however it is evident they are practically *ashamed* of their

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Profession,

Profession, and are a *Shame* to it: Religion would suffer less by their verbal renouncing it than now it does by their living so unsuitably to it.

3. *They are chargeable with this Sin, Who have no concern to carry on Christ's Reforming Design amongst others.* In this we must evidence our sincere compliance therewith in our own Souls. They give but sorry Proof of the Sanctification of their own Hearts, and the Reformation of their own Lives, who care not what becomes of Religion in the World, whether it be propagated or not. They will be at no Pains, break thro' no Difficulties, bear no Reproaches, for the attaining so good an End. It is possible for Persons to dislike and condemn those things in others which they practise themselves. Few *Vicious Parents* or *Masters* would have their *Children* or *Servants* tread in their Steps; they discern that Deformity in *other Mens Actions* which blind Partiality and Affection, for their Lusts hinders them from discerning in their *own*; but every one that sincerely hates Sin in himself, will endeavour to destroy it in others; for that *Hatred* of Sin is not sincere, which is not universal: All that are true to the Interest of Christ, cannot but desire that it may universally spread and obtain: They would gladly see *his Name hallowed, his Kingdom come, and his Will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven.* As this is the Matter of their daily Prayer, so they dare not but vigorously endeavour it in their Place and Station;

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tion: Without this they know that their Prayers are but hypocritical Wishes, and idle Words, that can never be pleasing to Christ. He expects that every one in their proper Sphere should put to their helping Hand in carrying on this his Design. All may contribute something, tho' some are better qualified and may do more than others. Where Christ gives Persons the Talents of Wisdom and Prudence, Authority and Wealth, puts them into Places of Power and Trust that are of an extensive Influence, he expects they shou'd be proportionably useful and serviceable. Negligence and Cowardice in them, is worse than in Persons in a lower Capacity, who want their Advantages and Opportunities. There are several Ways in which we may promote and subserve *this Cause* of Christ, viz. By serious Counsel and Advice, by Admonitions and Reproofs, by calling upon the *Civil Magistrate* to execute the Laws against profligate Sinners, or at least by assisting with our Purfes those that do so. They that can do the least, may help forward the Work by their fervent Prayers and holy Example, by openly approving and speaking up for it, and vindicating it, (as Opportunity offers) from those unjust Reproaches that are cast upon it by wicked Men. They, that think it below them thus to stand up and appear for the *Honour* of Christ, are chargable with this Sin of *being ashamed of him*, and may expect He will be *ashamed of them*, whoever they be, whether they make a smaller

smaller or a greater Figure in this World as the *meanest* are not below his Notice, so the highest are not above his Resentment, nor out of the Reach of his avenging Arm: Having thus explain'd the *Nature* of the Sin; I proceed

3. *To shew the greatness of it.* That this is a Sin that carries great Turpitude, and Guilt, and Malignity in it, will appear by considering

1. *The Person whose Cause they are ashamed of* the blessed Jesus: He who is the just Object of our highest Esteem, Adoration, and Honour, both upon the Account of what he is in himself, and what he has done and suffered for us. He is the eternal Son of God, the Brightness of his Father's Glory, and the express Image of his Person, clothed with all the transcendent Excellencies and Perfections of the divine Nature, the Redeemer and Saviour of Sinners, whom all the Angels of God worship and adore. Saint Paul was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, because it was the Power of God to Salvation. Rom. 1. 16. Christ himself, tho' he was to the Jews a Stumbling Block, and to the Greeks Foolishness; 1 Cor 1. 23, 24. yet to them that are saved, he is in a higher Sense the Power of God and the Wisdom of God, and consequently there can be no Reason why we should be ashamed of him. Again, If it was he that appeared for us, and espoused our Cause when it would have been a desperate one had not he undertaken it, and to Persons that did not thoroughly weigh Things, it might seem a

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shameful one in it self, and he knew it would certainly expose him to the unjust Reproach and Calumny of wicked Men. It is certain that the Cause of our Redemption was truly compassionate, and worthy the Espousal of the Son of God; If there had been any thing in it truly scandalous, he would never have spoke for acted any thing in our Behalf. *It became him for whom are all things, and by whom are all things in bringing many Sons to Glory, to make the Captain of our Salvation perfect thro' sufferings*, Heb. 2. 10. But the Decency and Fitness of this Design, and the Suitableness of the Means for the Accomplishment of it, did not lie obvious to every Eye: I question whether any created Eye did or could discern it antecedent to the Revelation of the divine Council and Purpose. When God's Majesty and Greatness, our Meanness and Vileness, and the several Aggravations of our Apostacy were duly considered, finite Creatures might well be at a Loss to know whether it was fit, that such vile Rebels should be interceded for, or that any Endeavours should be used to restore them to the divine Image and Favour: If the good Angels had been able, they might have been afraid or ashamed to interpose in this Case, not knowing but God might have looked upon it as a Dishonour and Affront to the Wisdom and Holiness of his Government, especially when he had so lately given an *awful* Instance of his Severity against Sin in the Punishment of the fallen Angels; when our Affairs were

were thus hazardous and doubtful in the View and Apprehension of all Creatures, *then* did the Son of God appear for us, he undertook to manage our Cause, so as effectually to secure both his Father's Glory and our Happiness: This he did freely and voluntarily, being under no other Obligation, *then* what his own Promise in Pity and Compassion to Sinners brought him under. This he did when he might have refus'd the *Undertaking* without any just Reproach to himself; nay, when he could have glorify'd his Power, Justice, and Holiness, in our Condemnation and Perdition; notwithstanding all this, he hath entred into Engagement for us, and has fully made them good: *tho' he was in the Form of God, and thought it no Robbery to be equal with God, yet made himself of no Reputation and took upon him the Form of a Servant, and was made in the Likeness of Men, he humbled himself and became obedient to the Death of the Cross.* Phil. 2. 7, 9. *He has endured the Cross and despised the Shame, and suffered the Contradiction of Sinners against himself.* Heb. 12. 2, 3. *His Visage was marr'd more then any Mans, and his Form more then the Sons of Men.* Isa. 52. 14. *He was despised and rejected of Men, a Man of Sorrow and acquainted with Greif.* Isa. 53. 3. *He gave his Back to the Smilers, and his Cheeks to them that plucked off the Hair: He hid not his Face from Shame and Spitting.* Isa. 50. 6. Now did the Son of God endure all these and many more Instances of Shame and Reproach, Scorn and

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and Ignominy in our Cause, and shall we be ashamed of him, or discourag'd at any little Reproach, we may meet with in serving his Cause and Interest? what monstrous Ingratitude, what an unsuitable Return would this be! We should rather look upon *Shame* for Christ as our *Honour*, and *Glory* in it as a noble Part of our Conformity to him, rejoicing with the Apostles, that we are counted worthy to suffer *Shame* for his Name Sake: Acts 5. 41. and that we have such an Opportunity of shewing our Esteem, Love, and Gratitude to him, for all that he has done and suffered for us. Further, to be ashamed of him, besides the Ingratitude of it, is practically to declare to the World, that we look upon the Design he came about, to be so foolish, unreasonable and absurd, that it is below his Dignity and Honour; and that he would have acted more becoming and worthy of himself, if he had suffered Mankind, to continue in their Apostacy from God, in a State of Enmity and Rebellion, without attempting their Reconciliation and Recovery. Christ will and cannot but highly resent, and severely punish such a vile Representation of himself, and of his redeeming Love and Grace to the World as this is.

2. There is nothing in this Cause that is real Matter of *Shame* and *Reproach*. Here I might consider the Reasonableness and Credibility of all the Doctrines of Christianity; there is nothing in any of them, that any wise Man has any Reason to be ashamed of. As it is a faithful Saying, so it is worthy of all Acceptation

tation that Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners. 1 Tim. 1. 15. But I shall confine my self to the Cause of REFORMATION you are engag'd in, that this is truly honourable, and no just Matter of Reproach is evident, whether you consider it with Relation to Christ or absolutely in its own Nature.

1. *Relatively* considered, it is the Cause of Christ, what he approves of, interests himself in; he has done much, and is still doing much to carry it on: You are but subordinate Instruments in his Hand: Can it be a Disgrace or Dishonour to be the Servants of Christ? Imitators of him, your Lord and Master: certainly this is the highest Honour Creatures are capable of; the most exalted Cherubims and Seraphims in Heaven, think it a principal Part of their Dignity, as well as Happiness, to be active Instruments in promoting the Honour and Glory of God, and the Redeemer.

2. *Absolutely* considered, what is there in it that a reasonable Creature should be ashamed of? Is it an unreasonable or an unworthy thing, to endeavour the saving of your selves and others, from Ruin and Destruction, both temporal and eternal? Are not the moral Precepts of the Gospel holy just and good? such as approve themselves to the Reason of all unprejudiced Minds, being admirably adapted to promote and advance the present Felicity and Happiness, both of particular Persons, and humane Societies? Is it unbecoming a Creature to be concern'd for the Honour of its Maker and Governour; or to do its uttermost to pre-

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vent his *Name* from being openly prophaned and blasphem'd by profligate Sinners? don't we owe as much Respect to the Name of our *heavenly* Father, and constant Benefactor, as we do to the Fathers of our *Flesh*, or to the Name of our Prince and Sovereign? Is it not becoming the Inhabitants of a Nation to have a Love for their native Country, and a mighty Concern to promote its Peace and Tranquility, Prosperity and Happiness; by endeavouring the Observation of those Laws, that would make a People happy, and executing the penal Sanctions upon notorious Criminals? If Sin be of a *shameful Nature*, and diffuses Misery and Ruin wherever it comes, it can be no Matter of Shame to stop and hinder the poisonous and fatal Infection. Suppose this should prove difficult and costly Work, suppose you should suffer in your Name and Estate, you may look upon all that you meet with, as so many *Scars and Marks of Honour*, received in the Field of Battle; nay, tho' you should lose your Lives in this Cause, you will die in the *Bed of Honour*, and not as a Fool dies. Considering the Master you serve, the Goodness of your Cause, and that massy Crown of Glory, that is prepared for such, there would be no matter for the Upbraidings and Reproach of Conscience, nor any real Blemish left upon your Names and Memory; but you will deserve to be had in *everlasting Remembrance*: This being really the Case, how inexcusable must they be who are ashamed where no Shame is, nay ashamed of what is

their Honour, and they have Cause to glory in

3. The *Character of the Persons*, that reproach and vilifie this Cause as a dishonourable Thing; which is intimated in the Text they are a *sinful and adulterous Generation*, the vilest and basest Part of Mankind; Persons that have so far debased humane Nature and brutified themselves, that they are not competent Judges of what is truly noble and honourable, and what is not; their Minds are darkned, their Inclinations vitiated, much of natural Light is extinguish'd in them, they have no distinguishing Taste of moral Good and Evil. Are the Opinions and Sentiments of such Men much to be regarded? are they fit to determine what is becoming the Dignity of humane Nature, who live so much below it, and are a real Reproach to it. A wise Man would no more regard their Scoffs and Flouts, then the Ravings of distracted Persons. Shall the Judgment of Malefactors be ask'd, whether the Laws that condemn them, are just and righteous, or whether it would be honourable in the Judge to execute those Laws upon them? would not that Judge act very meanly and unworthy of his Character, that should be ashamed to do it, for fear of being reproached by guilty Criminals. These and such as these, who do feel or deserve to feel the Weight and Penalties of the Laws are the Persons, that would bring a Scandal and Slurr upon your honourable Undertaking and yet as to some of them, as bad as they are it may be reasonably presum'd, that they

Judge

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Judgments and Consciences are not so blinded and perverted, as really to think and believe what they say: They are forced inwardly to approve and honour the Persons and Things they in Words reproach and condemn: Whether this be so or no, whilst you have the Approbation of your own Consciences, you may, and ought to go courageously on; for certainly that Man acts foolishly and wickedly, who to avoid the Scorn of Fools, endures the Confusion of his own Mind, and the Lashes of his own enlightned Conscience.

4. This is a Cause that has the *Approbation of the most competent Judges*; being the Cause of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ. God promises to honour those who honour him, 1 Sam. 2. 30. Christ will confess those before his Father in Heaven, who confess him before Men, Mat. 10. 32. It also has the Approbation of the best and wisest Men of all Denominations, however they differ in lesser and more disputable Things, they agree in this; Royal Proclamations, Acts of Parliament, several of the Judges and Justices really are, and all of them by Oath are obliged to be on the Side of Reformation against Prophaness and Debauchery. At the Beginning of Christianity the Cause of Christ fell under publick Odium and Reproach; the Powers of Earth and Hell did combine together against it, and yet at that Time it was worth standing by, and appearing for; those that did so then, never had any Reason to be ashamed of what they did: Christ's Cause was the same then that it is now: We must not make the Judgment and Approbation

bation of the greatest on Earth, the chief Reason why we espouse it; but when God is pleas'd to lessen our Difficulties, multiply our Encouragements, and greatly facilitate the Discharge of our Duty, by removing many of those Temptations and Discouragements, which others had to encounter with; we shall be the more inexcusable in our Negligence and Unfaithfulness. Does that Man act becoming a reasonable Creature, who is more aw'd and influenc'd by the Word of a few and unthinking Sinners, than by the Judgment of God himself, and of the greatest and best of Men, or who does more value their *Approbation* and vain Applause, than that *Honour* which comes from God the Fountain of all true Honour.

5. Those that are ashamed of this Cause, lie under *Personal Engagements* to serve and advance it. In our *Baptism* we promis'd, that we wou'd not be *ashamed* to confess the Faith of Christ crucify'd, and to fight under his Banner, against the Devil, World and Flesh; this Engagement stands in full Force against us, we cannot refuse to make it good, without being guilty of the greatest Perfidiousness and Treachery, and without forfeiting our Right to, and Interest in all the Blessings of the Baptismal Covenant. We either still retain the Christian Name, or we do not; if we *do not*, we are chargeable with the Guilt of *Apostacy*, and are liable to be treated as the wretched Despisers and Contemners of Gospel Grace: If we *do*, we are guilty of the grossest *Disimulation* and *Hypocrisy*, for by our acting, we do really desert that Cause,

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Cause, which by our Baptism we are bound, and by our continued Profession, we pretend to own and maintain; Can the Guilt of such be small?

6. *Lastly*, These Persons do at the same Time glory in that which is a proper Object of Shame. Sin is the Reproach of any Person or People. Prov. 14. 34. Every Sin is more or less just Matter of Shame, *those Sins especially*, which you are engag'd to punish and suppress: This Sinners are sensible of, whenever they are brought to true Repentance, then they *blush and are ashamed, and abhor themselves in Dust and Ashes. What Fruit had ye*, saith the Apostle, *in those Things whereof ye are now ashamed?* Rom. 6. 21. There is that Deformity and Monstrosity in Sin, it is so foolish and unreasonable, unprofitable and pernicious a Thing, that after the Commission, a Person cannot seriously and impartially review and consider it, without Shame and Confusion: How strange and unaccountable is it, that Persons should be ashamed to discharge their Duty in the Discountenance and Punishment of Sin, and yet reckon it no Disgrace to live in the Commission of gross and wilful Sins themselves, or at least to be Companions of and in Friendship with those that do so? What do they less than confound the Names and Natures of Things? They extinguish the Difference betwixt Good and Evil, calling *Evil Good, and Good, Evil; putting Darknes for Light, and Light for Darknes*; Isa. 5. 20. and so are liable to the *Woe* denounced against such.

Thus have I endeavour'd to give some Account of the Malignity of this Sin, I now proceed to consider

II. The

II. The *Awfulness* of the *Punishment*, that shall be inflicted upon such Sinners. I can give you but a short Account and Representation of it. They sometimes meet with severe Rebukes from the Providences of God in this Life; he singles them out, and makes them the *Marks* of his heavy and sore Indignation, and the Objects of publick Scorn and Contempt. However this may be, if the Punishment be never so long delay'd, it is sure and certain, and will be very severe and terrible at last; for *Christ* will be *ashamed* of them, when he comes in the *Glo-ry* of his Father, and the holy *Angels*. The Greatness of this Punishment will appear,

1. From the *Matter* of it; *Christ* will be *ashamed* of them, *i. e.* He will disown them, disclaim any Relation to, Acquaintance with, and Affection for them; tho', then they will be desirous and forward enough to claim and renew their Acquaintance with him, to put him in mind of the Profession they once made, and the Relation they stood in to him; how they have *eat and drank in his Presence*, and he has taught in their Streets, yet he will say unto them, *I know ye not, depart from me all ye Workers of Iniquity.* Luk. 13. 26, 27. He will profess to the World, he never approv'd of them, or own'd them, for his real Members. He always reckon'd it a Dishonour and Disgrace to be styl'd the Lord and Saviour of such fearful and unfaithful Wretches, tho' they should plead with never so much Importunity to be rank'd among his Friends, and to share in the purchas-

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fed Blessedness of his Kingdom. He'll reject all their Entreaties and Pleas with the greatest Detestation; instead of admitting them to Heaven, he will condemn them to the lowest Hell, to take their Lot and Portion with Hypocrites and Unbelievers, in the hottest Place there. All this he will do without any compassionate Relentings in his Heart or Countenance, nay with all the *Marks* of holy Scorn and Indignation: *He will laugh at their Calamity and mock when their Fear comes, when their Fear comes as a Desolation, and their Destruction as a Whirlwind, when Distress and Anguish cometh upon them, then shall they call upon him, but he will not answer, they will seek him early, but shall not find him.* Prov. 1. 26, 27, 28.

2. He that will be thus ashamed of them is the *blessed Jesus*, the compassionate Lover of lost Souls; he whose Favour and Countenance, they most need, and which would be of more Advantage and Consequence to them then that of the whole World; his being ashamed of them shews that their Crime is very great, it will admit of no Palliation and Excuse. That Cause can never be truly compassionate which the Saviour refuses to undertake, especially when he pleads against it instead of being an Advocate for it; there is no Appeal from his Tribunal; if he be ashamed of Sinners, it is not in the Power of all Creatures to relieve and help them; the *fallen Angels* will insult and deride them for their egregious Folly and Madnes; and the *good Angels* will have no tender Compassions remaining in their Breasts, for they will be of the same Mind and Sentiment with Christ.

3. The *Time* for all this will add to their Misery. This shall be at Christ's *second Appearance*, when he *comes in the Glory of his Father*: He will then look like himself as the eternal Son of God: This will be the Day of his *glorious* Manifestation, when all the Clouds of Infamy and Reproach, that have been here cast upon his Person and Offices, shall be dispers'd and scattered: Sinners shall *then* have other Thoughts and Apprehensions of him, than *now* they have, they shall know too late the Worth of an Interest in his Favour and Friendship. All the Glory he will then appear in, will serve to render them the more infamous and miserable: Again consider

4. The *End* of his thus appearing, which is to *render to every one according to their Works*. He'll adjudge them to, and fix them in their eternal State; those, that he is ashamed of then, will feel the Effects of his Displeasure for ever, they will have no after-Opportunity to pacifie his Anger, and restore themselves to his Love and Favour. The Contempt he then throws upon them, must abide upon them to all Eternity.

5. Another Aggravation of their Misery, will be the *publick Manner*, in which it shall be inflicted. They shall not be condemned and punish'd in private; the whole World shall be Spectators of their Shame and Disgrace; the Baseness and Deformity of their former Crimes, shall then be publish'd, and their Punishment shall be as publick nay more so, then ever their Contempt of Christ

was

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was or could be; Angels and Men shall be Witnesses and Judges of the Equity of their Condemnation. And lastly

6. The *Consciences* of Sinners themselves, will then be so far enlightened, that they'll be forc'd to own the Righteousness of Christ's Proceeding against them; their Punishment will be greater than they *can bear*, tho' not greater than they *deserve*: Sin will then appear in its true and proper Colours; they will no longer be under those fatal Mistakes and Delusions, which they now put upon themselves, but will clearly discern the Odiousness, Folly, and Deformity of Sin, and call themselves Fools a thousand times, that for the sorry Trifles of Time and Sense, they should bring upon themselves everlasting Shame and Misery. Their own enraged Consciences will upbraid them, as much as any can do, and the stinging Lashes and Reproaches thereof, will be that *deathless Worm* that will continually prey upon them in that *Fire* which shall never be *quenched*. I pass on to the

III. General: The answering of Objections; some of those I shall take Notice of, have been sufficiently answer'd by *Vid. Disney's Essay.* others; but 'till Men are *weary* of pleading the Cause of Vice, we must not be *weary* of refuting their vain Cavils, lest they should be look'd upon as unanswerable.

1. *Object.* Some may object, *They are not ashamed of the Cause of Christ*, or of this particular Part of it, *The Reformation of Manners*, but they like not your Way and Method of

carrying of it on; they think it below them to turn *Informers*; the Name *Informers* is grown odious and despicable, and no Man of Character cares for its Imputation. To this I answer,

1. A wise and good Man will first consult his *Duty*, and always prefer that to his *Reputation* with others, and in judging of Things, will more consider the true *Nature* of Actions, than any hard *Names* Persons may be pleas'd to put upon them; we must pass thro' *Evil Report as well as good Report* for Christ. He that cannot slight and despise a few reproachful Words, is but sordidly prepar'd to suffer *Martyrdom*.

2. To whom was it owing, that this has ever been a Name of Reproach? If there had never been any other Kind of Informers, than those which compose your *Worthy Societies*, this Name had ne'er lain under that Infamy that once it did; the Methods you take is the best Way to wipe off that *Reproach*, and to bring it into *Honour* and *Reputation*; tho' an everlasting Blot is justly left upon the Memory of most of those to whom that Name did formerly belong: Persons must wilfully shut their Eyes, that can't discern a wide Difference between our *Present Informers*, and those of that Name in *former Reigns*: As to the *Character* of their *Persons*, the *Cause* of their *Information*, and the *Motives* they went upon; they were generally Persons of very bad *Morals*, some of them of desperate *Fortunes*, who had no real *Regard* to, or concern for, *Religion* of any Sort; ready

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dý to forward and countenance the Designs and Encroachments of *Arbitrary Power*, to the introducing of *Popery* and *Slavery* among us : *Who* did they inform against, but Persons that were more righteous than themselves ? And for what ? but for worshipping God peaceably and quietly, accordingly to the Dictates of their own Consciences : By this Means some did enrich themselves to the Ruin of their poor Neighbours ; this was a Cause that Persons of Honour and Conscience, the Patrons of the just Rights and Priviledges of Mankind, could not but be ashamed of. Blessed be God, the Informations you are concerned in, are of another Nature, you inform against nothing but real Crimes, such as the Light of Nature, the Laws of God, as well as of the Land, do forbid and condemn ; such as you can give convincing Evidence of, and so are in no Danger of breaking the *Ninth Commandment* upon that Account. I dare appeal to the Consciences of Men, whether such Sins as Blasphemy, prophane Swearing, Drunkenness, Uncleaness, Sabbath-breaking, &c. have not a more apparent Tendency to the Dishonour of God and Religion, and to the Disturbance and Ruin of humane Societies, than sober and loyal Persons maintaining disputable Opinions in Religion, and worshipping God according to them ? There is the Plea of Conscience in the one, but none can pretend to it in the other. They that will not own they are convinc'd in their Consciences of the Sinfulness of their impure Practices, can't say that they are bound in Conscience to continue them ; there fore

fore Information in the one Case, may be justly blameable, when in the other it is truly honourable.

3. They that reckon the Name *INFORMER* is grown odious and despicable, I hope don't mean, that it was a Name of Honour, when apply'd to those, who inform'd against the worshipping Assemblies of *Protestant Dissenters*, but that now it is become a Name of Scandal and Reproach, since applyed to those that detect and inform against publick Houses of Lewdness. This would be to reflect upon the Wisdom of the Nation, who saw a Necessity of repealing the Penal Laws towards the *former*, but have multiply'd and invigorated them towards the *latter*.

As for your Personal Character, who are our present Informers, 'tis still (I hope) your continued Honour, to be free your selves from those Crimes which you punish, and endeavour to reform in others: Without this you can never escape the Judgment of God, or the Reproach and Condemnation of your Fellow Creatures— *Rom. 2. 3.* You are so far from enriching your selves with the Spoils of others, that you frequently recede from your own Rights, and don't always demand what legally you might; nay, I might add, you are at considerable Cost and Expence to carry on your Prosecutions. Since then the End you propose, is truly honourable, and the Means made use of, have no mercenary, selfish Aspect and Appearance; what is there in this whole Affair, that a *Man of Character* has any Reason to be ashamed of? They that dislike the most pro-

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misgiving Means of Reformation, are not very hearty Friends to the Thing it self. It may be again objected,

2. *Object.* That if the Business of *Informing* be not a Matter of Scandal, 'tis however " a Matter of *Indifferency*, except in Cases of *Treason, Murder and Idolatry* : Tho' Persons may lawfully inform against other Crimes, yet they may as lawfully decline it, and let it alone; they are not bound to prompt the Magistrate with Information against such Sins as Swearing, Drunkenness, Uncleaness, &c. To this I answer,

If the foremention'd Crimes were only of a private Nature, injurious to our selves, and the Punishment of 'em was of the Nature of a private Debt due to us, we might then in many Cases recede from our own Right, and pass them by, for it may not always be Injustice not to demand that which yet we may justly demand; but these Crimes are of a very different Nature; the Injury done by them, is done to God and the Publick; they, are a publick Dishonour to him, and have a natural and moral Tendency to bring down his Judgments upon a Nation, if they ben't restrain'd and punish'd; the Punishment is due to the Honour of God, and to the Safety and Happiness of publick Societies; if these Sins have no pernicious Influence upon them, why does the *Government* take any Notice of them, and make Penal Laws against them? And why does *Her sacred Majesty* in her *Royal Proclamations*, call upon her Judges of the Peace, and others concerned, to
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see to the Execution of them? If the Laws are just and necessary 'tis fit they should be executed, since without it they will soon grow into Contempt, and our Condition will be as bad, or worse, then if there were no such Laws. Without Information not one Crime in a thousand could ever be convicted and punish'd, and therefore that which is so necessary to keep up the Honour of the Law, and to answer the Ends of it, can be no indifferent Thing. This is a Duty we owe to God and the Publick, and what Power has any private Person to give up the Rights of either. When some of the *Israelites* brought the *Sabbath-Breaker* before *Moses* their cheif Magistrate, and inform'd against him; he did not reject their Information, and reproach them as *Busy-Bodys*, but put the Man in Ward 'till he had enquir'd of God; and because it was the first Breach of the Law, after its solemn Promulgation, he was stoned to Death by the Order of God. *Num. 15. 33.*

34. It may be farther objected
 3. *Object.* " That we shall best shew our
 " Compassion and Mercy to the Failings of our
 " Neighbours, by the non-Execution of the
 " Laws against them, and this is what the best
 " and most prudent Part of Mankind rather
 " chuse to do.

Answ. The seeming Severity you shew towards Offenders, is very consistent with, and may proceed from real Pity and Compassion. Severity to their *Bodies* is *Compassion to their Souls*, their noblest and most excellent Part; as it tends to convince them of the Evil of Sin, to bring them to

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Consideration and Repentance, and so to prevent their eternal Misery. The blessed God who is Goodness it self, takes the same Method to reclaim and bring back stubborn and disobedient Sinners—This also is Compassion to their *poor Families* that will otherwise be brought to Beggery and Ruin, and it's Compassion to the *Publick* which by this Means is clear of the National Guilt of such Sins.

This is the noblest and truest Kind of Compassion, that ought to take Place of a foolish Fondness for Mens present and bodily Ease, that would prove fatal and deadly to them. They take an odd Way of “*shewing their Compassion and Mercy* towards their guilty Neighbours, who represent their *gross Immoralities* as *humane Frailties*, and Infirmities, and are for letting them go on in Impunity without Check and Controul. Tho' such in their own Apprehensions may act the wise and prudent Part, by thus consulting their temporal Ease and Advantage, I fear they will not be found to have shewn the *Wisdom* of the Serpent in Conjunction with the *Innocency* of the Dove. Once more it may be objected,

4. *Object.* That just and good Men have been backward and averse to this Work of Information; for “*Joseph* had never been call'd a good Man and just for concealing the supposed Crime of the *Virgin Mary*, if it had been his Duty to have expos'd her to the Magistrate. We are told *Mat.* 1. 19. that he being of that Character, and not willing to make her a publick Example, was minded to put her away privily. To this I reply as follows

1. It's acknowledg'd on all Hands, that the Crime was only suppos'd and not real, *Joseph* was only weighing and revolving the Thing in his own Mind; if he had form'd any Resolutions, they were never put in Execution, being soon inform'd by an Angel of God, of the true State of the Case. But had the Crime been real, yet considering his *Relation* to, and *Affection* for her, and his own *Concernment* in her Reputation, he had lain under strong Temptations to be too indulgent in such an Affair. The Example of every good Man is not always to be a Rule to us; nor can we certainly learn from it, what our Duty is; but I need not offer any Thing of this Nature to take off the Force of the present Objection. For,

2. 'Tis plain he did not intend to let the supposed Crime go unpunish'd, and to cohabit with her notwithstanding, for he design'd to put her away privily; that is (as learned Men acquainted with the *Jewish* Customs tell us) he would write a Bill of Divorce, and put it into her Hand or Bosom, and so send her away; upon this the learned Dr. *Lightfoot* and Dr. *Whitby* and others, think he is stil'd a just Man, because he would not live with a suppos'd Adulteress, contrary to the Law of God and the Rights of his own Nation. This Punishment of a Divorce was no inconsiderable one; this was as great as our Laws allow, and much greater then the Generality of such Criminals suffer; how then can in Reason this Purpose of his countenance those, who are not for informing against such Crimes, by which means, they will go altogether unpunish'd? But then I add,

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3. What he intended to inflict, was in the Judgment of those learned Men, for Substance as much as he could legally do. Tho' an espoused Person by the Law of God was look'd upon as a Man's Wife, and if she was guilty of Uncleaness afterwards, might be punish'd with Death as an Adulteress; yet before this could be done, there must be legal Evidence and Proof; whereas in the present Case, if the Crime had been real, there was no legal Proof, that the Fact was committed after the Espousals; and therefore all that could be done, was to give her a Bill of Divorce. *Joseph's* Unwillingness to make her a publick Example relates to the *Manner* of inflicting the Punishment, and not to the *Nature* and *Kind* of it. If he had done that publicly, which he resolv'd to do privily, she would have been a more publick Example of Shame and Reproach; but being a kind and merciful Man, he was not willing needlessly to expose her Reputation. In this Respect he is worthy of your Imitation. So Sin be impartially punish'd, you may and ought to be tender of the Reputation of Persons, while there is any Hope of their Amendment. A Difference should be made between *new* Offenders and *old* hardened Sinners, that have no Reputation to lose. Persons need not to be publicly expos'd, when it will answer no valuable End, and will only serve to make them more desperate and incorrigible. *Lastly,*

4. Suppose that according to the *Rigour* of the *Jewish* Law, she might have been put to *Death*, had she been really guilty: All that we can infer from this Instance is, that *milder* Pu-

nishments should be *first* tryed, before we proceed to more *severe* ones. In the Execution of Laws which touch the Lives of Men, we should be very tender and cautious, not too forward to execute them without great Necessity: If at any Time it be partly left to our Liberty whether the Law shall be mitigated, or the Penalty inflicted to the utmost Extremity, we should generally incline to the compassionate Side. All this makes nothing against your honourable Undertaking or for the total Impunity of scandalous Sinners. The Penalties threatned in our Laws against those Crimes, are very mild and gentle, short of what most other Nations inflict, and therefore there is no great Danger of your being guilty of Severity by the most steady and impartial Executions. What further remains is a

IV. Short Improvement of this Subject.

1. To those, who are *notoriously guilty of this Sin of being ashamed of Christ*. How many are Enemies to the Work of Reformation in themselves and others! that habitually live in open Impiety and Wickedness, who declare their Sin as *Sodom*, and hide it not? Instead of putting on the Lord Jesus, imitating him in his Temper and Life, make Provision for the Flesh to fulfill the Lusts thereof? Oh! that such would be perswaded in Time, to consider what Indignation and Wrath, what Tribulation and Anguish they are treasuring up for themselves against the Day of the Revelation of the righteous Judgment of God. How great a Mercy would it be, if God by some Method or other would awaken them out of their present Security and Lethargy, and bring them to such Remorse and Sorrow for

Sin

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Sin now, that they may escape everlasting Shame and Misery! Tho' these Means be never so *painful* to the Flesh, and *disgraceful* in the Eye of the World if they are but *effectual*, they'll have Reason to be very thankful to God, and to look upon them as *merciful Severities*. The most likely Way to prevent the *everlasting Shame* of bold and daring, Sinners, is to put them to *open Shame* in this World: The Methods you (*Gentlemen* of these Societies) take with such Sinners, having this Tendency, cannot but be approv'd of by those who heartily desire the Repentance and Salvation of Sinners.

2. Let those be perswaded to *join heartily* in the Cause of REFORMATION, that have hitherto by one Pretence or other, been kept back and have done little or nothing in it. Are not you afraid to be found among the Deserters of Christ's Kingdom and Interest? Think it not enough, that you are not open Enemies to it; you must be active Instruments in promoting it, if ever you would approve your selves to him. There is no allowable Neutrality in this Case. He that is not *with Christ* is *against him*; he that *gathers not with him* scatters. If you are his real Freinds, why should you not take Part with him and his Servants against *Satan* and his Instruments, and do your utmost to overturn the Kingdom of Darkness and Wickedness in the World? Say not it is a sinful and adulterous Generation, which hates to be reformed; that it is in vain to attempt it, you shall but lose your Labour. Others to their Honour have gone before you, not without some encouraging Success: Why should not you cast in your Lot amongst 'em?

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The worse the Times are, the more unanimous, zealous and courageous, Christ's Servants should be. If Fear or Shame, or low Regards to your secular Interest, keep you from having any *share* in this difficult and honourable *Service*, you must not expect to *share* in the *Rewards* of it.

Those that are not and cannot conveniently be Members of these Societies, may and ought liberally to *contribute* towards their Support. This is what Persons of both Sexes should think themselves obliged to do. I would hope there are many of Ability here, that would readily offer their Assistance to so good a Work. Let it never be said, that the Cause of Reformation declines and sinks, because Persons will not be at necessary Charges to maintain it. Profligate Sinners are willing to make Prosecutions as chargeable as they can, in Hopes of discouraging and wearing out the Persons concerned; let not such be more liberal in the *Service* of their *Lusts*, than you are in the *Service* of your *Lord*. 'Twill be a sad Symptom indeed, if the Cause of Vice and Profaneness meets with more and greater Supporters than that of Reformation; this will look as if we were a People ripe for Destruction. The Judgments of God are abroad in the Earth: We at Home have not been, and are not, without some Tokens of his Displeasure: If no Care be taken to maintain and carry on a farther Reformation, we shall have Reason to fear, that present Judgments are only Presages and Fore-runners of more terrible Ones. God may justly resolve that since he *would have purged us*, and we *would not be purged*, therefore we shall not be purged.

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from our Filthiness any more, till he has caus'd his Fury to rest upon us. Ezek. 24. 13.

3. What has been said may serve to *engage and quicken* the Members of these Societies, to *Steadiness and Perseverance* in the Work of Reformation. Turn not your Back upon that Cause, you have so long and vigorously espoused: If you should fall off, grow weary, and faint in your Minds, it will make Sinners suspicious, that you find something in it you are ashamed of. If it be still the Cause of Christ, and you are satisfy'd of its Goodness and Excellency, why should you not be as hearty and zealous in it as ever. *Look to your selves that you lose not the Things you have wrought.* After you have vanquish'd the greatest Difficulties, and have met with so much Encouragement and Success; give not out at some lesser Tryals which do still remain. Are you willing to lose the Approbation of your Lord? Can you bear the Thoughts of being number'd with them whom he will be ashamed to own? Will you do and suffer so many Things as you have already done and suffer'd, in vain? If not, *be faithful to the Death, and Christ will give you the Crown of Life.*

In your vigorous Prosecutions of particular Crimes, give me leave to remind you of, and recommend to your Care and Inspection, those *publick Nurseries of Lewdness and Wickedness, viz. the Play-houses,* (that are now again opening) which are the standing Scandal and Reproach of a Christian Reformed Nation: All Attempts to regulate 'em, and keep them within the Bounds of Modesty and Vertue, have hitherto

hitherto been vain and fruitless: I fear the Infection is got so deep, that it is like the *Plague of Leprosy* to the Wall of the House, that can no other Way be cleansed, than by pulling down. It's great Pity a Law can't be obtain'd for their total Suppression; 'till this can be done, I hope you will keep them in some Awe, by putting those Laws in Execution, that are in force against them; without this they will teach more Wickedness in a Night, than you can reform in many.

4. *Lastly*, Labour so to manage this whole Affair, that your Lord and Master may not be ashamed of you in the Judgment of the great Day; but that you may have his Approbation and Applause. Be universally Consciencious; think it not enough to be free from the gross Pollutions you punish in others, but keep Consciences void of Offence towards God and Man. Live not in any Sin whatsoever, either of Omission or Commission, against the Light and Conviction of your own Minds. Let a Sense of Christ's Authority, and a Regard to his Honour and Interest, be the principal Thing that sways and governs you in what you do. Keep Death and Judgment, and Eternity much in the View of your Faith. Let it be a small thing with you to be judged of Man's Judgment. Approve your selves to Christ, depend upon him for Direction, Assistance and Success, and wait patiently for the promised Reward; When Christ who is your Life shall appear, you shall also appear with him in Glory: When he denies and is ashamed of others, he'll confess you before his Father which is in Heaven.